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The Impacts of Coins

The Fertile Crescent is one of the most influential areas in the world. It is the birthplace of many inventions and concepts, one of which is still used today, and is known as the coin system. The Fertile Crescent is an area in Southwest Asia and Northeast Africa that contains very fertile soil that was essential to early humans. Civilizations in this area include Mesopotamia, Ancient Egypt, the Phoenicians, and many more. The ancient fertile crescent was a very influential place to the world. It introduced the alphabet, iron making, shipbuilding, and a banking system, all of which are important even today. This was also an area of political power, as many powerful civilizations called the fertile crescent home. These powerful nations include Persia, Egypt, and the Macedonian Empire. These nations show how the fertile crescent was a region for powerhouses (Unfortunately, today the fertile crescent does not have the same reputation, and is a very unstable region. Its fertile soil is also beginning to fade due to climate change, and the effects are becoming irreversible). The development of the coin systems by the civilizations in the fertile crescent had a significant impact in that it improved the trading system, and created a better sense of an organized economy.

Coins are small, usually metal, round and flat shaped currency. Everyone knows what they are, and there are many kinds, such as the dime, nickel, quarter, and penny. The amount of coins are usually counted in cents, and are found all throughout the world. The invention of these metallic disks is somewhat unknown, but is thought to have happened around the reign of King

Alyattes (635-585 B.C.E.), first minted in Lydia, which was a civilization located in modern day Turkey (Mark). Coins were very quick to make their way throughout the Fertile Crescent. The first city to officially use coinage in Phoenicia is thought to be Sidon. The reason for this, Sidon was very powerful in a world where many were struggling (Markowitz). Coins were an essential change to human innovation in ancient times for a few reasons. First, bartering that took place before the invention of coins was inconvenient, and could not be easily achieved. Not all items were easy to trade, and some could not be divided into more reasonable amounts (Hoberman). In addition, civilizations that were poorer were not able to trade for more valuable items, as they had nothing to reasonably offer. Although coins were useful for financial and trade purposes, they were also used to spread propaganda, and display art, (often religious). Kings and queens could use these coins to show their authority and power, or spread religion throughout an empire (Arnold). Some other art on these coins depict historical events, or symbols of their culture, which can be used as a form of education, as they teach of historic and religious events. This shows that the use of coins did not just benefit the economy, but could be used for much more (Arnold). Another reason that coins were much needed at the time, was that they were easily made from readily available materials from Spain. This differs from regular barter, as civilizations may not always have a trading good readily available. Fortunately, this was not a major problem with coins, and metals were exported from Spanish mines to areas in the Fertile Crescent (Markowitz). Now it is evident that coins were the right way to innovate, and were objectively better than trade systems.

The coin system proved that trade would be much more straightforward once implemented. Before coins, international trade consisted of grains, precious metals, common materials, oils, and ceramics (Mark). But around 5,000 years ago, the first coins began to arise

(Kusimba). These materials continued to be sold when coins came around, but coins created a more beneficial way of trade, especially when one side was not abundant in resources (Hoberman). Another way that coins improved trade was that not every civilization was in need of a good or service, but since coins do not have a select job unlike specific resources, as they are simply a form of currency used to purchase goods. As a result of this, civilizations could use their riches on anything that may be needed. One problem arises when coins are introduced to a civilization, this way of international trade only works when all parties are in use of coins. This, although, was not a problem for long, as many civilizations either adopted coins from other civilizations, or created them on their own. This is the reason why civilizations today do not necessarily trade goods for goods, but more regularly using the currency of the civilizations involved to perform trade, which that same currency can be converted to be used in whichever civilization's native trade. Speaking of native trade, the idea of coins could also be used as a form of payment in jobs. Instead of a worker getting paid in grains or shelter, they were paid in currency. This allows the worker to make their own decisions with their own resources, and be able to have financial growth.

Coins allowed for a more organized and controlled economy than its predecessors. This spread of standardized currency did not come for no reason. An economy in civilization has existed much longer than coins, but coins gave a different perspective on it.. The evidence in this claim comes from the phoenician city, Sidon, was one of the first cities to implement coins, and was also one of the most powerful at the time. This power surge in Sidon's economy was due to coins being more commonly exchanged than a specific good or service, leading to a better economy (Markowitz). Along with the flow of money, coins were also used in the banking system. Banks were a safe place to store one's riches, which is obviously still seen today, and an

essential place to work with money. One downside of coins which is still dealt with today, is inflation. Inflation is the change in the value of money, usually occurring when there is a major influx in the amount of money that exists, and money is worth less. This is a much bigger problem today than it was in ancient times, where it was much more common to be paid in human essentials such as food or shelter. All of this information just shows that clearly, coins were important enough to still be used today. Although we may not use the Mesopotamian shekel in everyday life, the idea has transformed into paper money, or digital currency. From banking to inflation, the currency system has stayed intact for thousands of years.

In summary, the coins developed in the Fertile Crescent were very impactful to the world in that they enhanced the trading system and created a way to track their economy with ease. The creation of coins was one of the most impactful inventions of mankind, and has influenced the world for generations. Essential concepts such as the bank or the idea of a basic currency sprang from the invention of coins. These coins were used for all purposes, such as payment, or purchases. It is hard to imagine a world where the idea of coins were never invented, and the history that changed along with them.

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